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ABSTRACT

Academic advisement has been found to be inextricably intertwined with student retention, and is acknowledged by faculty instructional load policy at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) as an important part of faculty workload. At UALR, undergraduate advising is a mandatory process, with responsibility shared between faculty and professional academic advisors. Faculty development in the academic advising process is systematically provided, and includes a shadowing sequence in which the faculty member reviews a student's entire academic record and observes a professional staff academic advisor during an actual advising session. UALR has developed an undergraduate advisement record form for undergraduate advisement record-keeping and for evaluating faculty advising performance. The form is used by the University College and by the College of Business. The form offers a visual reminder of what is expected to be covered in an advisement session. As an evaluation tool, the form provides invaluable formative and summative information for many functions, for example, peer review and feedback, promotion and tenure portfolios, and error resolution. Samples of the form are appended. (Contains 15 references.) (JB)

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by: Dr. Thea M. Hoeft

Background

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The Utilization of an Undergraduate Academic Advisement Record Form in the Evaluation of Faculty Advisement

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Background

At the 1994 Higher Education Critical Issues Seminar, Recognizing Faculty Work: Reward Systems and Faculty Evaluation, which was held at the National Education Association headquarters in Washington, D. C. Education Commission of the States speaker Sandra Ruppert discussed the critical issue of evaluating faculty workload in relation to accountability and productivity legislation that has increased in the past several years, coupled with a decrease in the share of funding for educational expenses by both state and federal governments.

Ms. Ruppert lists the "Top Ten" performance indicators for states as:

1. Degree completions and time to degree
2. Persistence - retention rates by gender, ethnicity and program
3. Enrollment - graduation data by gender, ethnicity and program
4. Accredited and eligible programs
5. Remedial activities and indications of effectiveness
6. Transfer rates to and from two and four year colleges
7. Pass rates on professional exams
8. Placement data on graduates
9. Follow-up studies of alumni and employer satisfaction
10. Faculty workload and productivity

In differentiating faculty workload and productivity the following indicators for the states are:

1. Lower division courses taught by faculty rank
2. Average faculty salaries by rank
3. Faculty/student ratios in courses
4. Instructional contact hours
5. Average number of faculty hours per week in instruction, student advising and course preparation, etc.
6. Student satisfaction on accessibility of faculty (advising, etc.)

In 1993 the Arkansas State Legislation requested the State Board of Higher Education

to establish rules and/or regulations necessary for the implementation of Uniform Reporting of Revenues, Expenditures, and Productivity by Academic Department, Program, and Activity as Required by ACT 537 of 1993. This act requires all Arkansas public institutions to submit final reports annually to the board. Procedures, methodologies and uniform forms have yet to be finalized. If approved productivity funding may be based upon specific categories of retention, graduation rates, quality as measured by licensure examinations, rising junior examinations and exit interviews.

As in other states, the State of Arkansas is reflecting the reality of explicit mandates to rethink learner, faculty, and institutional productivity. Incentive funding for higher education is a new reality that initially may foster a compliance mentality yet strengthen the delivery of higher education embracing the concepts of quality, assessment and accountability.

Retention and Faculty Academic Advisement

Academic advisement is not an activity that occurs in isolation within either the academy or educational services.

Numerous researches have indicated that in a variety of ways effective academic advisement is inextricably intertwined with student retention (Austin, 1975; Austin 1985; Beal and Noel 1980; Gordon, 1984; Habley, 1981; Habley, 1988; Hossler and Bean, 1990; Vowell, Farren, and McGlove, 1990; Vowell and Karst, 1987).

The organizational structure that frames the institutional academic advisement delivery system is varied. The University College concept, the Academic Advisement Center, the individual faculty member within a specific college and department are non inclusive examples of organizational structure under which the academic advisement delivery systems operate. Who provides academic advisement may in part depend on how the individual institution has structured the academic advisement delivery system (Habley and McCauley, 1987; Strommer, 1994). Focusing on improving student retention through academic advisement is a process in which everyone is a shareholder. Faculty, staff, and students are all retention agents and accountable to various elements of academic advisement as they function within their respective institutional roles.

Noel (1983) states that "good advising may be the more critical and most significant

academic function other than teaching because what you are doing is bringing together academic content and applying it to the lives of people" (pg. 18). Laff, Shein, and Allen (1987) in describing faculty in the academic advising role suggest that faculty are not as adept to foster the integration of personal and educational growth of students. Faculty expertise lies in knowing their respective departmental curriculum and their own areas of research. Perhaps there is a certain acceptance that the traditional role of academic advisement that was once ascribed to faculty members is best fulfilled by professional academic counselors whose primary function is to provide developmental academic advising. Professional experience and research suggests that given the proper tools and professional development, faculty members can be instrumental in attracting students to their academic discipline while being effective academic advisors as a part of their work load, summer employment or release time from teaching for specific advising duties.

University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Faculty Instructional Load Policy

UALR Faculty Instructional Load Policy for full-time tenure and tenure-track faculty acknowledges that "instruction involves much more than simply time in the classroom: developing, planning, advising, and conferring with students are all activities, part of normal instructional duties (pg. 1). Administrative reassignments for chairs, directors, and program coordinators take in account many factors one of which are advising duties. Faculty not an administrative assignment may request reassigned time for a variety of purposes "contingent upon departmental instructional needs as well as upon evidence of continued achievement" (pg. 2). "Annual workload descriptions will be included in both promotion and tenure portfolios. All activity, including that for which reassignment was granted, will be documented and evaluated" (pg. 5). Academic departments and colleges are charged with the development and submission for approval of instructional load plans based upon the policy. This policy acknowledges that academic advising for UALR faculty is an important part of faculty workload that needs to be documented and evaluated.

Academic Advisement of Undergraduate Students

The academic advisement of undergraduate students at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) is a shared responsibility between faculty and professional academic advisors. Academic advisement is a mandatory process each semester for fully admitted undergraduate students. A student may not utilize the automated telephone registration system until a "Y" is planted on the advising computer

screen by the individual who is authorized to advise the student.

Students that have been officially accepted into the major of their choice after meeting specific requirements are advised in the major department or the college dean's office by a combination of faculty and staff.

Students who have not declared a major are advised in University College, the Office of Academic Advising where professional advisors primarily advise. Faculty are hired specifically for the purpose of providing developmental academic advising in the summer months.

To learn, understand and practice the academic advisement function takes not only desire but time. In the best of circumstances professional development activities aimed at understanding the complexities inherent in the various facets of the developmental academic advising process needs to be systematically provided to individuals undertaking this endeavor.

Inherent in the function of academic advisement are the depths of complexity unseen by individuals who do not interact on a daily basis with layer upon layer of state, federal and university policies, procedures, and practices. The interplay of these "layers" is not mechanistic when viewed in the context of a singular student situation (human dimension) and academic record. A sequence of professional development opportunities are provided including a shadowing sequence. In this phase the faculty member observes a professional staff academic advisor during the actual session. In preparation the faculty member reviews the entire student academic record. The shadowing experience integrates the formal phases of the professional development sequence in which assessment information, curriculum sheets and various forms related to policies and procedures are reviewed. Entering freshmen and transfer student academic records are provided as exercises in file preparation which apply policy to the unique individual student situation. Instructions in the completion of the UALR Undergraduate Student Advisement Record are a part of the exercises designed to integrate and document both the technical and subjective elements of the case studies (actual academic records). Since the record is also a part of the University College student academic record it is utilized to improve the academic advisement of faculty, staff, and graduate assistants who are assigned advising functions.

An Evaluation Tool

Academic advising evaluation instruments are either formative or summarative and those that exist are designed with different assessment purposes. Srebnik (1988)

details 29 assessment instruments utilized in the evaluation of different categories related to academic advising.

To facilitate individual faculty accountability and improvement in academic advisement the UALR Undergraduate Student Advisement Record can be utilized as an assessment tool. The following examples are provided:

* UALR Undergraduate Student Advisement Record - University College
* UALR Student Advisement Record - College of Business Administration.

These forms have been designed to include many functional elements both technical (Stokes, 1992)/prescriptive (Crookston, 1992) coupled with activities that include counseling relationship components (Ender, Winston, and Miller, 1992). Each form has been customized to the unique advising concerns of undecided undergraduate students in University College and declared majors in the College of Business Administration. The forms identify groupings of items that reflect a variety of developmental academic advising activities related to the functional role of an academic advisor and student. The University College form goes through a yearly revision based upon input from advisors. Additional approved curriculum changes, new state laws and policies are also reviewed for inclusion. Items no longer applicable are deleted.

As an evaluation tool this form provides invaluable formative and summarative information even if it is not completely filled out. Examples are:

* Visual reminder of what is expected to be covered in an advisement session
* Accounts for the students that were advised by name and major
* Accounts for the advisor by name
* Accounts for the date that the advisement occurred year and academic term

* Accounts for the context (individual, group, telephone) in which the advisement occurred
* Accounts for the number referrals by advisors
* Accounts for the specific nature of a referral
* Accounts for the intrusive nature of the advisement session (eg. limit of hours because of academic difficulty or condition of admission)
* In cases of alleged error that may impede a students academic progress, the form may assist in the resolution of the error, and may assist in the improvement of the cause of the error.
* Accounts for individual advisor error
* Overall, upon external or peer review the form is a feedback mechanism that can indicate areas that the individual advisor needs to improve in
* Indicate to external agencies evidence of, the nature of, and level of faculty involvement in academic advisement
* Provides a sample for advising case studies in promotion and tenure portfolios
* Other (based upon customized variations)

In a comprehensive evaluation process this evaluation tool does not assess student satisfaction of faculty academic advising. The data it can provide is a starting point in the process of learning how to identify what has worked in practice that can be adopted and useful within certain institutional settings. The College of Business recently adopted the University College form and is currently utilizing it in the Dean's office.

UALR

Undergraduate Student Advisement Record

University College

I.D. Number | Last Name | First | Middle | Academic Term & Year

School / College | Degree Objective | Major | Minor / Concentration

Advisor Action:

- ❒ Student Responsibility & Advisement
- ❒ New Student Guide
- ❒ ACT/SAT Score Review
- ❒ Credit by Exam Options
- ❒ Placement / Readiness Exams
- ❒ Foreign Language Placement Test
- ❒ MBTI Review
- ❒ Core Curriculum / Pattern Sheet
- ❒ Transfer Credit Review
- ❒ Undergraduate Bulletin_____
- ❒ Desired Major College Admission Requirements
- ❒ **College Readiness Program Prescribed Courses**

- ❒ Orientation / Information_____
- ❒ 7th Semester Freshman
- ❒ Registration Procedure
- ❒ Repeat Course Work_____
- ❒ 13hr/4hr/6hr Limit
- ❒ Verify Worksheet Address as Correct
- ❒ Has Prerequisite Coursework for Proposed Courses

Students admitted conditionally or continuing students on academic probation are limited to 13 credit hours each semester or 4 credit hours during a summer term.

Forms Needed:

- ❒ College Freshman Placement Acceptance Form
- ❒ Special Exception Approval Request Form
- ❒ Repeated Course Deletion Form
- ❒ Academic Major Declaration Form
- ❒ Concurrent Form (UA)
- ❒ Academic Clemency Form
- ❒ Degree Plan AAGS / AS

Refer To:

- ❒ Admissions & Records
- ❒ Center for Developmental Skills
- ❒ College of Business Administration
- ❒ Counseling & Career Planning Services
- ❒ Testing & Student Life Research
- ❒ Pre-Medical Information
- ❒ Nursing UAMS
- ❒ CHRP UAMS
- ❒ Specific Department_____
- ❒ Specific Person_____
- ❒ Phone #_____

R/A	Department	Course No.	Course Title

R=Recommended A=Alternate

Advisement for Alternative Course is Optional at the Discretion of the Academic Advisor

Comments_____

I understand that adherence to this program of study is necessary in order to make progress toward the degree indicated and that I have been informed of and reviewed the items checked or written on this record.

Signature of Student _____ Phone#_____ Date_____

Approved:
Signature of Advisor _____ ❒ Group Date _____

White (UC File) *Yellow (Student)* *Pink (UC Data)*

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UALR

Undergraduate Student Advisement Record

University College

I.D. Number | Last Name | First | Middle | Academic Term & Year

School / College | Degree Objective | Major | Minor / Concentration

Advisor Action:

- ❒ Student Responsibility & Advisement
- ❒ New Student Guide
- ❒ ACT/SAT Score Review
- ❒ Credit by Exam Options
- ❒ Placement / Readiness Exams
- ❒ Foreign Language Placement Test
- ❒ MBTI Review
- ❒ Core Curriculum / Pattern Sheet
- ❒ Transfer Credit Review
- ❒ Undergraduate Bulletin_____
- ❒ Desired Major College Admission Requirements
- ❒ **College Readiness Program Prescribed Courses**

- ❒ Orientation / Information_____
- ❒ 7th Semester Freshman
- ❒ Registration Procedure
- ❒ Repeat Course Work_____
- ❒ 13hr/4hr/6hr Limit
- ❒ Verify Worksheet Address as Correct
- ❒ **Has Prerequisite Coursework for Proposed Courses**

Students admitted conditionally or continuing students on academic probation are limited to 13 credit hours each semester or 4 credit hours during a summer term.

Forms Needed:

- ❒ College Freshman Placement Acceptance Form
- ❒ Special Exception Approval Request Form
- ❒ Repeated Course Deletion Form
- ❒ Academic Major Declaration Form
- ❒ Concurrent Form (UA)
- ❒ Academic Clemency Form
- ❒ Degree Plan AAGS / AS

Refer To:

- ❒ Admissions & Records
- ❒ Center for Developmental Skills
- ❒ College of Business Administration
- ❒ Counseling & Career Planning Services
- ❒ Testing & Student Life Research
- ❒ Pre-Medical Information
- ❒ Nursing UAMS
- ❒ CHRP UAMS
- ❒ Specific Department_____
- ❒ Specific Person_____
- ❒ Phone #_____

R/A	Department	Course No.	Course Title

R=Recommended A=Alternate

Advisement for Alternative Course is Optional at the Discretion of the Academic Advisor

Comments_____

I understand that adherence to this program of study is necessary in order to make progress toward the degree indicated and that I have been informed of and reviewed the items checked or written on this record.

Signature of Student _____ Phone#_____ Date_____

Approved:

Signature of Advisor _____ ❒ Group Date _____

White (UC File) *Yellow (Student)* *Pink (UC Data)*

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U·A·R

Student Advisement Record

College of Business Administration

I.D. Number | Last Name | First | Middle | Academic Term & Year

Degree Objective | Major | Undergraduate Bulletin

Advisor Action:

- ❒ Student Responsibility & Advisement
- ❒ New Student Guide
- ❒ Credit by Exam Options
- ❒ Core Curriculum / Pattern Sheet
- ❒ Transfer Credit Review
- ❒ Desired Major College Admission Requirements
- ❒ Registration Procedure
- ❒ Repeat Course Work _____
- ❒ 13hr/6 hr Limit
- ❒ Verify Worksheet Address as Correct
- ❒ Has Prerequisite Coursework for Proposed Courses

Students admitted conditionally or continuing students on academic probation are limited to 13 credit hours each semester or 4 credit hours during a summer term.

Forms Needed:

- ❒ Special Exception Approval Request Form
- ❒ Repeated Course Deletion Form
- ❒ Academic Major Declaration Form
- ❒ Concurrent Form (UA)
- ❒ Academic Clemency Form
- ❒ Degree Plan

Refer To:

- ❒ Admissions & Records
- ❒ Counseling & Career Planning Services
- ❒ Testing & Student Life Research
- ❒ Specific Department
- ❒ Validation Required _____
- ❒ Specific Person _____
- ❒ Phone # _____

R/A	Department	Course No.	Course Title

R=Recommended A=Alternate

Advisement for Alternative Course is Optional at the Discretion of the Academic Advisor

Comments _____

I understand that adherence to this program of study is necessary in order to make progress toward the degree indicated and that I have been informed of and reviewed the items checked or written on this record.

Signature of Student _____ Phone# _____ Date _____

Approved:

Signature of Advisor _____ Date _____

White *Yellow (Student)* 11 *Pink*

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